

How to Promote Back Sleeping in Your Community



The main goal of the “Back to Sleep” campaign in African American communities is to increase national awareness of placing babies to sleep on their backs to reduce the number of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) deaths among African Americans. The most effective way to achieve this goal is to work within individual communities across the Nation. This is your opportunity to make a difference in your community and help protect the well-being of our infants.

How to Use the Materials in This Kit

Here are some tips on how you can use the materials in this Kit to reduce the risk of SIDS in your community:

- ◆ **Brochure**—Distribute the brochure at local group meetings (faith organizations, community centers, etc.), hospital and physicians’ waiting rooms, libraries, senior citizen centers, and other locations throughout the community. You can distribute the brochure at local community events, such as fairs, block parties, cultural celebrations, and other observances. You may want to join forces with local hospitals so that a copy of the brochure is given to parents when their newborn is released from the hospital.
- ◆ **Magnets**—Hand out campaign magnets at local community events and health fairs. Contact local doctors’ offices, health centers, pediatricians, and hospitals to see if they are willing to give the magnets to new and expectant African American parents.
- ◆ **SIDS Information**—Send copies of the information sheet to local reporters along with other “Back to Sleep” campaign materials that provide background information.
- ◆ **Myths and Facts About SIDS**—Sponsor local “town hall” meetings or community forums to discuss the myths and facts associated with SIDS among African Americans and how individuals and organizations in the community can work together to educate the public. Use the sample community flyer to promote your event.
- ◆ **Actions to Reduce the Risk of SIDS**—Use this informative piece as a drop-in article for community newsletters and weekly newspapers. These publications are often looking for articles and items of interest to the community.

How to Promote Back Sleeping in Your Community (continued)



- ◆ **Responses to Questions About SIDS**—Provide a training session for your organization’s staff and volunteers on how to address difficult questions from people in the community who are not aware of the benefits of back sleeping. Identify a small group of trained volunteers who are willing to go out into the community and educate people about the importance of back sleeping.
- ◆ **Sample Display Ad**—Adapt this display ad to include information about your organization. Place it in church bulletins, newsletters, and local papers. Adapt the sample **Bus Ad** for local use.
- ◆ **Video**—Provide copies of the video to organizations or agencies in your community that sponsor classes for new and expectant parents. Show the video at local community fairs and events so that people can be exposed to the message about back sleeping as they’re walking by. Even if they don’t stop to talk, they may still get the message and pass it on to others or pick up “Back to Sleep” campaign magnets and other information. The video can also be used in local churches, community centers, health centers, doctors’ offices, hospitals, and other places where new or expectant parents may visit.
- ◆ **Sample Media Release**—Insert your organization’s information and send the release to local daily and weekly newspapers, radio, and television stations, magazines, community newsletters, and other news outlets. You may also want to include the “SIDS Facts” handout, the brochure, the radio public service announcements (PSAs), and other campaign materials.
- ◆ **Sample Radio Public Service Announcements**—Contact the public affairs directors at local radio stations and encourage them to read the PSAs on the air. Feel free to change the contact information if you want listeners to call someone in your organization for more information or referrals.
- ◆ **Training Materials**—Use these presentation materials to educate parents, caregivers, and others about SIDS and the recommended actions that reduce the risk of a baby dying of SIDS. Three training modules for 15-, 30-, and 60-minute sessions are included. Use them to make presentations at schools, childcare centers, faith organizations, community centers, libraries, hospitals, health care clinics, and other places to reach African American parents and other caregivers.

How to Get Involved

Even if you aren’t part of an organization or agency that’s actively promoting the “Back to Sleep” message, you can still get involved—even if you don’t have a lot of time. Here are a few ideas:

How to Promote Back Sleeping in Your Community (continued)



- ◆ Contact your local health department or organizations that have SIDS programs in your community. Ask them if they offer information on back sleeping to new or expectant parents. If they do, tell them you hope they will continue to do so in the future because it's an important message that can ultimately save lives. If they don't, tell them how important it is and give them the toll-free number for the "Back to Sleep" ordering line (1-800-505-CRIB) for free brochures, videos, and other materials.
- ◆ Write letters, send e-mails, or make telephone calls to local community leaders to tell them about the "Back to Sleep" campaign and the importance of reaching African Americans. Encourage them to get involved and to support community efforts to get the message out.
- ◆ Don't forget senior citizen centers, churches, and other community- or faith-oriented groups. Everyone needs to learn about the importance of back sleeping and other ways to reduce the risk of SIDS. Ask the staff at these organizations if you can display copies of campaign materials, such as the brochure or the "Myths and Facts About SIDS" handout, in a place where people can pick them up.
- ◆ Make a list of everyone you know who has an infant under the age of 1, anyone you know who is expecting a child, and everyone you think may become a mother or father in the next few years. Next time you see them, tell them about your involvement in the "Back to Sleep" campaign and its messages. It's a subtle yet effective way to get the message out.
- ◆ If you have the time to make a larger commitment, coordinate a workshop or presentation using the training materials provided in this packet. The materials are designed to be adapted for workshops or brief presentations. You can also contact organizations in your community with an interest in the safety and well-being of infants. Tell them that you want to get more involved in educating people in the community about the importance of back sleeping and that you are willing to work as a volunteer. Together, you can decide how your skills and life experience can best be used to educate others in the African American community about SIDS.

These are just a few ideas about how you can get involved in educating your community about SIDS. You may have your own ideas too, but the most important thing is that you get involved.

Many of the national organizations that support the "Back to Sleep" campaign have state and local chapters or affiliates. Please review the list of National Partners to identify local affiliates in your community. Working together, we can help save infant lives!



Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS): African American Communities Raising Awareness and Reducing Risk

Help reduce the risk of SIDS, also known as “crib death,” in our community. Come to this important workshop to learn ways to help protect your baby.

Get the facts. Find out how SIDS can affect you, your family, and our community.

Who should attend: Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, babysitters, childcare providers, and everyone who takes care of infants

When:

Where:

Time:

For more information, contact:



Babies Sleep Safest on Their Backs!

Placing babies to sleep on their backs is the safest way to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), also known as “crib death.”

Other ways to help protect your baby:

- ◆ Place your baby to sleep on a firm mattress
- ◆ Remove fluffy blankets, comforters, and other soft items from the sleep area
- ◆ Make sure your baby’s head and face stay uncovered during sleep
- ◆ Don’t let your baby get too warm while sleeping
- ◆ Don’t smoke before or after the birth of your baby
- ◆ Take your baby for well-baby check-ups
- ◆ Get good health care before and during your pregnancy

**Help reduce SIDS deaths in our community.
Help save infant lives!**